

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Minutes

February 3, 2006

Present

Greg Bennett, Chair
 Susan Nelson, Vice Chair
 Rosie Toy
 Andrew Ross, Vice Chair
 Jack Schubert
 George Grosch, City Council
 Josh Storer

Absent

Joel Rea

Staff

Joe Whinnery, Public Works
 Steve Rogers, Public Works
 Lt. Jon Keefer, Police Department

Visitors

Walt Prichard, Mid-Valley Bike Club
 Som Sartnurak, City Staff
 Aaron Manley, City Staff
 Paul Liesy
 Mark Schurman
 Aloyon Archambault
 Wendy Byrne
 Carrie Burkholder
 Dean Codo
 Margaret Caro
 Jerry Rooney
 Laura Duncan Allen
 Richard Burgess
 Bruce Hecht
 Karl Hartzell
 Milt Cardwell

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
I. Call Meeting to Order/Introductions	X		
II. Approve January 6, 2006 Minutes			Approved, as amended.
III. Visitors Comments		X	
IV. Old Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit East/West Bike Route: Final Recommendation from City Staff Kings Boulevard Extension North of Walnut Van Buren Street Bridge Project Update 	X X		Approved recommendation for use of sharrows on East-West bike route.
V. New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision Clearance in Urban Core Corvallis Neighborhood Housing 			Approved a recommendation to be forwarded to the DPC. Approved a variance for a bike rack configuration.
VI. Information Sharing	X		

I. Call Meeting to Order/Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were made.

II. Approve January 6, 2006 Minutes

Page 3, second bullet, third sentence, the words “unless the crosswalk is striped” should be deleted.

Commissioners Schubert and Toy, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve the minutes, as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Visitors Comments

Wendy Byrne is a cyclist who was struck by a pickup truck January 12th while commuting home from work. Ms. Byrne, a resident of Corvallis for seven years, said she has never lived in a more bicycle-friendly, bicycle-accessible community. However, her commute lately has become “exponentially dangerous”. She made a plea that the Commission make a motion to City Council and other appropriate City departments to enact a comprehensive education, enforcement and safety program to effectively reduce vehicle accidents with bicycles and pedestrians.

Lt. Keefer said the Police Department first identifies a problem and then works toward a solution. Chair Bennett has approached Lt. Keefer about enforcing the new pedestrian laws. The Police Department sent out, through local newspapers, an educational information piece regarding the pedestrian law which took effect January 1, 2006. The law basically states that motor vehicles must cede the right-of-way to pedestrians at both marked and unmarked crosswalks. An enforcement program was developed and will be implemented. During the initial two weeks of the program, warnings and informational pamphlets will be issued to offenders of the law. The second two weeks will bring citations and informational pamphlets.

Jack Schubert asked Ms. Byrne to describe the incidents of near-misses she referred to in earlier testimony. Ms. Byrne said the most common occurrences happened while she was traveling in the bike lane in the same direction as a vehicle. The vehicle did not activate a turn signal nor pay close attention to bicyclists. NW 9th Street and Circle Boulevard is a particularly hazardous intersection for this type of occurrence. Another common occurrence is when motorists attempt to precede a bicyclist into a turn. The motorist clearly sees the bicyclist but aggressively tries to beat the bicyclist to the spot.

Mark Schurman said he has noticed an increase in the aggressiveness of drivers lately.

Dean Codo, a twenty-five year resident of Corvallis, has traveled exclusively via alternative transportation for the last fifteen years. Mr. Codo said that in the last year drivers’ attention to bicyclists and pedestrians has diminished greatly. He was involved in an accident six years ago which was caused by a motorist who did not fully stop at a stop sign.

Jerry Rooney, a former BPAC Commissioner, say he feels bicyclists have lost ground to motorists in terms of awareness over the last few years. He asked the Commission to consider “bicycle boulevards”. These boulevards would be marked as such to heighten motorists’ awareness.

Richard Burgess is a driver for Dial-A-Bus and is involved with the Bike Safety for Kids program. Mr. Burgess said bicyclists bear some of the blame for confrontations on the streets between motorists and bicyclists. He was involved in an accident with a bicyclist at night because the rider had no reflective clothing or reflective lights. Chair Bennett said the Commission has contacted the Police Department about the problems of bicyclists riding the wrong direction and riding without reflective lights, two main factors in accidents.

Carrie Burkholder is a daily bicyclist. She said she sees instances every day in which both bicyclists and motorists do not know the law. She said education is needed for all concerned, particularly regarding intersections.

Walt Prichard said visibility is one of the most important factors in avoiding accidents between bicyclists and motorists. He suggested encouraging local bicycle shops to sell bright colors to bicyclists instead of the mostly black colors currently sold.

With time running short for the Visitors Comments section, Chair Bennett asked if any Commissioner would like to make a motion regarding Ms. Byrne’s request to the Commission to make a recommendation to Council to enact a comprehensive education, safety and enforcement program. Steve Rogers said, in lieu of a recommendation, the Commission could take the citizen testimony and mull it over, and put the item on a future Commission agenda for further discussion. The Commission agreed to this course of action.

IV. Old Business

- **Revisit East/West Bike Route: Final Recommendation from City Staff**

Background:

The Engineering Division was asked to consider several options to create an East-West bike route into Downtown Corvallis. The Commission ultimately recommended that the Engineering Division pursue a bike lane within a travel lane.

Discussion:

There will be a marking, known as a “sharrow”, which will indicate bicycles traveling within the travel lane. The markings will designate the street a “shared use lane” and will be used in lieu of traditional bike lane striping. Markings will be posted in the center of the lanes near intersections and alleys for safety reasons. Studies have shown that “sharrows” markings tend to persuade bicyclists to use the center of the lanes and not ride on the right edge which is a more dangerous position.

Josh Storer asked if consideration was given to using a sharrow symbol of a color other than white. Mr. Manley answered that he, Joe Whinnery and ODOT's Michael Ronkin met and decided that coloration other than white would not be of a safety benefit. Mr. Manley said consideration was given to the use of signs indicating sharrows but it was ultimately decided to not use signs. Neither Portland nor San Francisco uses signs. Mr. Ronkin went further in advocating reduced signage.

Chair Bennett asked Steve Rogers if the sharrows would be re-painted as soon as needed or would they have the same maintenance schedule as other striping projects, which is generally once per year. Rogers said sharrows would be made of tape, not paint. Tape lasts longer and reflects better, therefore would not need as much maintenance as painted symbols.

Chair Bennett asked staff about plans for educational programs being made available to the public in advance of the sharrows' use. Whinnery said various local publications will be used to get the word out about the sharrows.

Chair Bennett asked if sharrows may be used in future projects for the City. Mr. Sartnurak said Harrison Boulevard would be a good candidate. The Commission agreed to make use of sharrows a future agenda item.

Walt Prichard asked if CTS buses travel on Monroe Avenue or Madison Avenue east of 5th Street. Rogers answered buses do not travel these routes at this time.

Josh Storer said he again wanted to raise the issue of back-in parking. He feels it would be safer than front-in parking in reducing vehicle/bicycle accidents.

Whinnery said he spoke to the Downtown Parking Commission (DPC) and the Downtown Corvallis Association (DCA) regarding the use of sharrows. Both bodies were in favor of the sharrows.

Commissioners Nelson and Ross, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission recommend the use of sharrows for the East-West bike path. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Kings Boulevard Extension North of Walnut**

Steve Rogers reported that City staff and two developers met two weeks ago to further discuss the potential alignments of Kings Boulevard, north of Walnut Boulevard. The developers proposed four alternatives. Two were quickly eliminated from consideration by City staff and two new ones were added for consideration. The developers took back the four alternatives to make additional detail. Rogers anticipates presenting to the Commission some hybrid of the four alternatives, consisting of a couple of travel lanes for vehicles, a couple of bike lanes, at least one sidewalk and some narrow park strips. He will keep the Commission apprised of any developments.

- **Van Buren Street Bridge Project Update**

This effort began almost one year ago. The community is to consider which alternatives are to go forward into an environmental impact statement process for alternative replacements for the Van Buren Street Bridge. Also, consideration will be given for the disposition of the existing bridge. Meetings on the project were postponed for the last four-five months due to the need for data collection, but have recently resumed. Two groups are actively involved with the project. One is a stakeholders group, of which Chair Bennett and Steve Rogers are a part. That group met two weeks ago to mainly discuss the new bridge alternatives. Very little discussion involved the disposition of the existing bridge.

Alternatives were presented for the new bridge. In all alternatives, full bicycle/pedestrian facilities are included. Steve Rogers said there were five alternatives that have been discussed by ODOT, and that movement toward a preferred option or options is developing, but the process is still ongoing and an open house will be held to help arrive at a final decision. The mostly likely scenarios are as follows:

1. A new bridge in place of the existing bridge. The new bridge would be placed in the exact location currently occupied by the existing bridge.
2. A second alternative contained two parts. The first part calls for a new bridge slightly downstream from the existing bridge. This would allow the existing bridge to be a detour route and then disappear, or for the existing bridge to be free standing with no connection, or be a detour bridge with new approaches built for bicycle and pedestrian use only. The second part calls for connections to the new bridge to be brought down to Second Street instead of First Street. The Stakeholders group unanimously rejected the second part.
3. The new bridge would be placed further from the existing bridge. The existing bridge would stand on its own and would not be impacted historically by the new bridge.

Rogers said if the existing bridge were reconnected as a bicycle/pedestrian path, the estimated cost would be \$2.4 million. ODOT is on record as saying it would not provide funding for ongoing maintenance of the bridge.

The next step in the process will be an open house public meeting hosted by ODOT. The date of the meeting is undetermined but Rogers believed it to be in April. The meeting will be well-publicized and it was Rogers' hope that many citizens will attend.

V. New Business

- **Vision Clearance in Urban Core**

Chair Bennett and Jack Schubert canvassed downtown City streets and determined three intersections with vision clearance problems which could lead to accidents involving motor vehicles and pedestrians. Schubert identified the three intersections:

1. SW Jefferson Avenue and Second Street. The northeast corner of this intersection allows diagonal parking within four feet of the pedestrian crossing. Schubert's recommendation is to eliminate diagonal parking currently employed by the parking spaces nearest the corner and replace them with one or two parallel parking spaces.

2. SW Adams Avenue and 3rd Street. The southeast corner permits parking within four feet of the crosswalk. One-way traffic flowing north creates a hazard for pedestrians crossing to the west side of 3rd Street as well as pedestrians crossing SW Adams Avenue to the north side of the street. Schubert recommends one parking space on the southeast side of 3rd Street be eliminated to remedy a potential hazard.

3. SW Jackson Avenue and 2nd Street. The northwest corner of the intersection permits parking within two feet of the pedestrian crossing. Schubert's recommendation is to adjust parking to give pedestrians a clearer view of oncoming traffic.

Rosie Toy also identified SW Jefferson Avenue and Second Street as a troublesome intersection. She recommended returning Jefferson from Second to First Street to a one-way street.

Margaret Caro asked if any accidents have been reported lately at the intersection of SW 3rd Street and Adams Avenue. Lt. Keefer reported no accidents in the October-December, 2005 quarter. Ms. Caro said the intersection is particularly dangerous when motorists are traveling northbound on 3rd Street and attempting to turn right onto Adams Avenue.

Josh Storer asked if the bigger problem is the way laws are written vis a vis parking or enforcement of written laws. Steve Rogers said it's a little of both. Historically, the City has attempted to maximize downtown parking availability.

Joe Whinnery talked about a database he has begun to use called "Intersection Magic". It is a database which records all accidents and sends the data to Salem for data input. Every intersection is searchable. The results show the cause of the accident, the activities of the parties involved in the accident, daytime or nighttime, weather conditions, if a DUI were involved, and any other pertinent information. Data is available for accidents through 2004.

Walt Prichard suggested looking into creating parking spaces for motorcycles only. Whinnery said staff is considering motorcycle parking near intersections or other trouble spots. Bennett said he spoke to ODOT representatives who told him there is funding for "bulbs" on 3rd Street.

Commissioners Ross and Toy, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve a recommendation, regarding the three intersections listed above, to have the Parking Commission investigate ways to lessen the dangers at the intersections as well as any others which are later identified. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Corvallis Neighborhood Housing**

Background:

Community Development has asked the Commission to recommend or reject an endorsement of a variance to be granted to Bruce Hecht for a bicycle rack configuration. The bicycle rack will be used to hang bicycles from the ceiling of a storage facility located on the grounds of a Southeast Corvallis neighborhood co-housing facility.

Commissioners Nelson and Storer, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve a statement of support for the variance requested by Bruce Hecht for a different bicycle rack configuration for the new co-housing project. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Information Sharing

Bennett said he and Lt. Keefer will soon meet to discuss ways of putting information into media outlets regarding safety issues.

Next meetings: March 3, 2006, at Madison Avenue Conference Room, 7:00 a.m.
April 7, 2006, at Madison Avenue Conference Room, 7:00 a.m.